

**ACQUISITION PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM (APDP)  
CERTIFICATION APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS  
FOR  
SYSTEMS PLANNING, RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT & ENGINEERING (SPRDE)**

***PLEASE--Read these instructions before contacting your APDP Focal Point!***

**BACKGROUND.** The Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act (DAWIA), Public Law 101-510, went into effect on 5 November 1990 and directed that the Secretary of Defense, acting through the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, shall establish and implement, in such manner as the Secretary considers appropriate, policies and procedures for the effective management, including accession, education, training, and career development, of persons serving in acquisition positions in the Office of the Secretary of Defense and the Defense Agencies. Certification is the process to ensure that individuals have the mandatory education, training and acquisition experience necessary to fill designated acquisition positions. DOD Manual 5000.52-M establishes the certification requirements for all career fields. These requirements do, on occasion, change in order to reflect acquisition policy changes. The most current source of certification requirements is the current Defense Acquisition University Catalog that can be accessed at URL: <http://www.acq.osd.mil/dau/>. DOD Manual 5000.52-M prevails in all matters regarding the Defense Acquisition Education, Training and Career Development Program, with the exception of the current certification standards. This document provides the current SPRDE certification standards and a review of the application procedures **as of 1 October 1997**. Application for Certification will use the applicant's SURF or Career Brief; therefore it is important to ensure these documents are kept up to date and accurately document SPRDE related experience.

*Note:* The most recent Acquisition Position Revalidation initiative was directed by HQ USAF/CV memorandum, dated 18 Sep 97, and is scheduled for completion by 1 Dec 1997. These instructions have been updated to be consistent with guidance provided in the Acquisition Position Revalidation initiative.

**REQUIREMENTS.** Refer to the SPRDE Certification Standards (Atch 1) or DAU FY98 Catalog for the mandatory Experience, Education, and Training requirements.

**HOW TO APPLY.** You must formally request certification by submitting an application letter detailing how you meet SPRDE requirements using the format shown in the sample letter at Attachment 2. This format is necessary because unlike other stalls, the requirement for engineering experience means we must confirm SPRDE-related experience which is not always obvious on a SURF or Career Brief. Please follow these steps:

1. GET AN UPDATED SURF OR CAREER BRIEF . ***Military personnel*** should contact the servicing Military Personnel Office and request an APDP SURF (a short personnel brief) to attach to the letter. The SURF will summarize your education, training courses, duty titles, AFSCs, current APDP certification levels, acquisition and SPO time. ***Civilian personnel*** should contact the servicing Civilian Personnel Office and request an Acquisition Career Brief (Option 5) to attach to the letter. When you order your Option 5, make sure you ask for ***both*** Parts 1 and 2. Part 2 summarizes your acquisition coding. The Career Brief contains similar information to the military SURF. **IMPORTANT:** *If your SURF or Career Brief is not current or correct, contact your personnel office to update your official record.* Individuals in organizations with an established APDP infrastructure should accomplish these updates ***before*** applying for certification.
2. DOCUMENT YOUR EDUCATION. You must have one of the following: 1.) At least 10 years of acquisition experience in Systems Planning, Research, Development & Engineering as of 1 Oct 91 or 2.) A Baccalaureate degree (B.S.) in Engineering, Physics, Chemistry, Mathematics, or other B.S. degree that is focused in a science or engineering discipline and requires completion of an advanced mathematics course sequence (calculus, differential equations, numerical analysis, etc.). This is **mandatory** for Level I, II or III SPRDE certification.

3. **DOCUMENT YOUR TRAINING.** Refer to the current Defense Acquisition University Catalog for the comprehensive list of **required** training courses. It is important to have acquisition training documented in your official personnel record. Your certification will be delayed if your SURF or Career Brief does not reflect **completion** of the required training.

4. **DOCUMENT YOUR EXPERIENCE.** You can count up to one year experience for graduate level academic work. All other experience must be demonstrated by one of the following methods:

a. If your past experience has been previously reviewed and coded, your SURF or Acquisition Career Brief will be used to determine your total SPRDE experience. However, the reviewer may, and should, question the validity of SURF or Career Brief entries that appear inconsistent with position coding guidelines.

b. If your past experience has not been previously reviewed and coded, you must provide copies of your Officer Performance Reports (OPRs) or Civilian Position Descriptions (CPDs) for the assignments you believe qualify as SPRDE experience.

c. If you believe your past experience has been improperly coded, you must provide documentation (including OPRs and CPDs) to substantiate your claim.

d. If you have industry experience performing SPRDE duties on government contracts, please provide the name of the company you worked for, the government acquisition program supported, the corresponding time periods, and a detailed description of your duties and responsibilities.

In all instances the functional area reviewer will assess all of the information to determine if you meet the experience requirements required for SPRDE certification. Experiences that are acceptable for SPRDE certification are:

Plan, organize, monitor, manage, oversee, and/or perform research and engineering **acquisition activities** relating to the design, development, fabrication, installation, modification, or analysis of systems or system components. Duties normally require identification, establishment, organization or implementation of **acquisition** engineering objectives and policies, or establishment of specifications. The duties are usually accomplished by degreed scientists and engineers **supporting acquisition** programs, projects or activities conducted in support of contracts, grants, and other acquisition instruments. May include engineering management, design, development, experimentation, chemistry, physics, mathematics, and computer engineering fields. Primary assignments are in laboratories, system program offices, product/logistic centers, and acquisition support staffs.

Experiences generally not allowed for SPRDE certification: Test and Evaluation, Acquisition Logistics, Communications-Computer, Intelligence, Manufacturing and Production, Quality Assurance, Base Civil Engineering, and In-House Research & Development.

**ENDORSEMENT.** Sign your application, include a telephone number and duty location where you can be reached for questions. After your package is received and reviewed by your organizational Focal Point, your organizational two-letter Engineering Field Functional Manager will endorse your package to SAF/AQRE. Other endorsements are not necessary, but your organization may require additional coordination or endorsements for their administrative process. Check with your Focal Point for any additional requirements.

**FORWARDING YOUR APPLICATION.** Send your completed package to your organizational APDP Focal Point. Your Focal Point will review your package and coordinate any corrections you may need to make. Once your package passes review, the Focal Point will forward it to your organizational two-letter

Engineering Field Functional Manager for endorsement and administrative action. If you are at a location without an Engineering APDP representative, forward your package to: *SAF/AQRE, 1060 Air Force Pentagon, Washington DC 20330-1060*. If specifically delegated approval authority, your organizational Engineering Field Functional Manager will approve your Level I or II certification. SAF/AQ/HQ AFMC has approval authority for all SPRDE certification levels. Your application will be reviewed by the SPRDE APDP Program Manager in SAF/AQRE.

**PROCESSING TIME:** Our goal is to process Level III applications within 2 weeks of receipt at the headquarters. **CAUTION: We may return any application that is incomplete or that does not meet the requirements outlined in these instructions.**

**QUESTIONS?** *Please contact your local organizational APDP Focal Point if you have any questions..*

If necessary, your local Focal Point will contact the MAJCOM Headquarters (add link to SPRDE website with MAJCOM POCs) and get an answer for you. The SAF/AQRE SPRDE functional POC is Lt Col Paul Coutee, DSN 425-7857 or (703) 588-7857, e-mail address is : couteep@af.pentagon.mil.. SAF/AQRE SPRDE assistance can also be attained from Ms Leslie Peasant, DSN 425-7836, or Mr Marty Jacobs, DSN 425-7809. Fax number is (703) 588-0066.

3 Atch

1. SPRDE Certification Standards
2. SPRDE Application Letter Format
3. Frequently Asked Questions

## **Atch 1**

### ***SPRDE Certification Standards***

#### **SYSTEMS PLANNING, RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT & ENGINEERING - LEVEL 1**

##### ***EDUCATION:***

Have ONE of:

- Baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution of higher learning in engineering, physics, chemistry, mathematics, or related field
- At least 10 years of acquisition experience in Systems Planning, Research, Development & Engineering (as of 1 Oct 91)

##### ***EXPERIENCE:***

- One year of acquisition experience in science or engineering

##### ***TRAINING:***

- ACQ 101 Fundamentals of System Acquisition Management [BU5]

#### **SYSTEMS PLANNING, RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT & ENGINEERING - LEVEL 2**

##### ***EDUCATION:***

Have ONE of:

- Baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution of higher learning in engineering, physics, chemistry, mathematics, or related field
- At least 10 years of acquisition experience in Systems Planning, Research, Development and Engineering (as of 1 Oct 91)
- (Desired) Master's degree from an accredited institution of higher learning in engineering, physics, chemistry, mathematics, operations research, management or related field
- (Desired) Nine semester credit hours from among: accounting, business finance, law, economics, industrial management, quantitative methods, or organization and management. DANTES or CLEP exams may be substituted.

##### ***EXPERIENCE:***

- Two years of acquisition experience in science or engineering
- (Desired) An additional two years of acquisition experience in science or engineering

##### ***TRAINING:***

- ACQ 201 Intermediate Systems Acquisition [JHA]  
Prerequisite: ACQ 101 Fundamentals of Systems Acquisition Mgmt [BU5]
- SYS 201 Intermediate Systems Planning, Research, Development, and Engineering [BE2]

**Atch 1**

Prerequisite: ACQ 201 Intermediate Systems Acquisition [JHA]

- (Desired) A DAU level 200 or level 100 course mandatory for acquisition logistics, program management, quality assurance, communications-computer systems, manufacturing and production, test and evaluation, or systems planning, research, development and engineering

**SYSTEMS PLANNING, RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT & ENGINEERING - LEVEL 3**

***EDUCATION:***

Have ONE of:

- Baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution of higher learning in engineering, physics, chemistry, mathematics, or related field
- At least 10 years of acquisition experience in Systems Planning, Research, Development and Engineering (as of 1 Oct 91)
- (Desired) Advanced degree from an accredited institution of higher learning in engineering, physics, chemistry, mathematics, operations research, management or related field

(Desired) 12 semester hours from among: accounting, business finance, law, economics, industrial management, quantitative methods, or organization and management. DANTES or CLEP exams may be substituted

***EXPERIENCE:***

- Four years of acquisition experience in science or engineering
- (Desired) Four additional years of experience in acquisition positions of increasing responsibility and complexity

***TRAINING:***

- SYS 301 Advanced Systems Planning, Research, Development and Engineering [HV1]  
Prerequisite: SYS 201 Intermediate Systems Planning, Research, Development and Engineering
- (Desired) Any mandatory DAU level 200 or level 300 course in acquisition logistics; program management; quality assurance; communications-computer systems; manufacturing and production; test and evaluation; or systems planning, research, development and engineering

**Atch 2**

**LEVEL 1, 2 & 3 CIVILIAN / MILITARY SPRDE APPLICATION LETTER FORMAT**

**MUST BE TYPED ON OFFICIAL LETTERHEAD**

*(Italicized and blank areas are for applicant to complete)*

MEMORANDUM FOR \_\_\_\_\_ *(Your Command APDP Focal Point)*  
\_\_\_\_\_ *(Your Command Two-Letter Engineering Field Functional Manager)*

SAF/AQRE  
IN TURN

FROM: \_\_\_\_\_ *(Your Name and Complete Office Symbol)*  
\_\_\_\_\_ *Full Address*

SUBJECT: Application for Acquisition Professional Development Certification in Systems Planning, Research, Development and Engineering (SPRDE)

1. In accordance with DOD 5000.52-M and standards published in the Defense Acquisition University (DAU) Catalog, I, *( insert your Name, Grade, and SSN )*, request certification for Level \_\_\_\_ in the SPRDE APDP. Enclosed is my SURF/Career Brief showing that I have completed the requirements to qualify for certification in the SPRDE career field. Request review by the local SPRDE APDP Functional Manager. I presently occupy a *(Non-Critical / Critical)* Level \_\_\_\_ Acquisition Position in the \_\_\_\_\_ functional area *(please indicate what your position is coded, e.g.: Non-Critical Level 2 in Developmental and Sustaining Engineering; or Program Management; or Acquisition Logistics; etc.)*.

2. I can be reached at *( provide your Office Symbol, Mailing Address and DSN phone number/FAX number)*.

\_\_\_\_\_  
*(Applicant's Signature and Title Block)*

**Attachments:**

1. Civilian Career Brief/Military SURF
2. Civilian PDs/Military OERs/OPRs (if needed)

1st Ind, \_\_\_\_\_ (*Office Symbol of Your Command Two-Letter Engineering Field Functional Manager*)

TO: SAF/AQRE

The above individual is applying for certification at Level \_\_\_\_ in the SPRDE APDP. We have reviewed the application and recommend approval.

---

*(Your Command's Two-Letter Engineering Field  
Functional Manager Signature and Title Block)*

### Atch 3

#### *Answers to Frequently Asked Questions*

1. Question: Are training fulfillments still authorized?

Answer: No. As of 30 Sep 1997, fulfillments are no longer accepted for credit because the transition period of the program has ended and personnel are expected to have the opportunity to attend the required courses as outlined in the DAU Catalog.

2. Question: I work at a location with no established APDP infrastructure and am having difficulty in updating my APDP SURF or Career Brief. What should I do?

Answer: You may send a copy of your current SURF to SAF/AQRE along with the necessary documentation required for the update and SAF/AQRE will update your record for you.

3. Question: I would like to get certified in several career fields and use my experience from a given assignment for both career field certifications. Can I do this?

Answer: No. The SPRDE career field will permit usage of only true SPRDE experience as coded in the SURF or Career Brief for certification. At the time the experience is coded it is important to determine in which career field the majority of the individual's experience lies and then choose the appropriate code.

4. Question: I am an incumbent of a Level II SPRDE position. I have had no Level I training, but have completed all Level II training. Can I get certified at Level II without completing Level I training first?

Answer: Yes. You are only required to complete the training for the level position which you occupy.

5. Question: One year of a certified academic degree program beyond a Baccalaureate degree can count toward the certification experience requirement. Do professional military education (PME) courses qualify?

Answer: No, they do not. In addition, the course of study beyond a Baccalaureate must be in an area that supports acquisition.

6. Question: Will duties related to scientific or technical intelligence experience in positions which support acquisition, such as exploitation of foreign weapon systems or technologies count as acquisition experience?

Answer: Generally no, however there may be some circumstances when it can. If your OPR or CPD shows that the majority (50% or greater) of your duties involved direct support of one or more acquisition programs to field a new or modified material solution to an Air Force operational need, then yes the time would count.

7. Question: Does work in a laboratory count as acquisition experience?

Answer: It may and it may not. If your duty involved using your scientific or engineering background to monitor a contractual effort to satisfy an Air Force need, then yes the time would count. If your duties involved no contractual oversight and you were part of a team that sought to solve a problem in-house, then no the time would not be credited.